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COLONY COMMERCE;

O R,

REFLECTIONS

O N T H E

COMMERCIAL SYSTEM,

A S I T R E S P E C T S T H E

WEST-INDIA ISLANDS,

O U R

Continental Colonies & the United States of America:

W I T H S O M E

R E M A R K S

O N T H E

PRESENT HIGH PRICE OF SUGAR,

A N D

THE MEANS OF REDUCING IT.

By **ALEXANDER CAMPBELL BROWN.**

✓ L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER, BOND-STREET; fold also by
W. and J. STRATFORD, No. 112, HOLBORN-HILL.

[Price Two Shillings.]

SA 1065.65

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P R E F A C E.

A Period of unusual prosperity is an unfavourable time to propose great alterations in our Commercial System. It ought however, to be remembered, that when we speak of our Commerce as wonderfully prosperous, we only mean that it is prosperous compared with the former state of it. Most of the Commercial Regulations in Europe were made, not with a design to promote the direct advantage of any body, but to prevent the advantage of some rival; and the trade of the people in Peace, as well as their lives in War, have been sacrificed to that shapeless Phantom, that Fiend, the Balance of Power. When People shall be left to do their business in the manner they find most advantageous to themselves,
even

even though others should also profit by it, Commerce will immediately become such, that the world will be astonished, that we could call the present state of it prosperous. So far as respects the West-India Trade few will doubt the propriety of some alteration in our System.

The Writer of the following Sheets, not having the most distant idea of making fame or fortune by his Publications, and fully convinced that his principal Remarks are just, and some of them important, he commits them to the Public without any of that trembling Anxiety which sometimes attends Authors.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

THE principles of Commerce are so few, and simple, that they are perfectly understood by all, except Legislators and learned Politicians. Every other man knows, that he employs his time and capital best, when he does that business which will bring him the most valuable returns; and that he saves his profits best when he buys what he wants at the cheapest market. This rule is invariable and universal, nor can a case be even supposed, in which the commercial profit of a Country is not pursued in the best possible manner, if each individual does that business which produces the most value. Our present commercial system however supposes, that in some cases a man employs his time and his capital best, (at least for the public
B interest)

interest) not when he takes the cheapest and easiest method to obtain what he wants, but when he takes the most expensive and laborious method. This is the principle of all those laws which prohibit, or by heavy duties restrain, the importation of every article which can, by almost any means, be produced in this country. There is no occasion to make laws to prohibit the importation of any article, which can be made here cheaper than it can be imported. The design is, to prevent the Importation of those articles, which can be brought from abroad cheaper than they can be made at home. For instance, a man wants a piece of wrought silk, and knows that he can go into his work-shop, and within three days produce Goods enough to buy this article abroad, and pay every expence of bringing it home. An unlearned man would think this the best method, and would practise accordingly, but the law says it is cheaper for him to make it himself, though it will cost him the labour of four days instead of three. The law says it is better (at least for the public) that he should go into the silk-loom and make it there, though he might make it on his anvil in three-fourths of the time. Though this part of the system has formerly been admired, it is now generally disapproved. The public will probably soon have but one opinion on the subject, *viz.* That all prohibitions, restrictions, and bounties, tend to lead the industry of the people off from those employments

ployments which are to the public most profitable, and direct it to those which are less profitable. Those who adopt this opinion, will consider that mercantile system as most perfect, which leaves all trade most free ; and unless they have other objects than the commercial and pecuniary advantage of the public, they will be in favour of repealing all regulating duties, prohibitions and acts granting bounties on any particular trade.

It is not my task to prove, by logical reasonings, the justice of this opinion ; this has already been fully and accurately done by many writers ; none, however, so early did the subject justice, as Adam Smith, in his Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Indeed, very little reasoning was ever necessary, except to extricate ourselves from the prejudices of the old system. After this was effected, the assertion, that those regulations were best, which left every man at liberty to sell his goods at the highest market, and buy at the lowest, was so simple and so clear, that it needed neither explanation nor argument.

It, however, seldom happens that a thorough reform, in any great system of errors, is begun and completed by one man. It is as much as can be expected of an individual, if he thoroughly detects the errors of the old system, without establishing
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the right in the place of the wrong. Dr. Smith, however, did more, he faithfully detected the errors of the present system, and very accurately laid down the right principle in all the simplicity of the subject, *viz.* That commerce is in the best possible state, when none of the people are induced by legal regulations, to leave those employments which, in the natural state of things, would be most profitable; or in other words, a perfectly free trade, not affected by bounties or restraints is best. But this excellent writer, not satisfied with his own beautiful and simple system, went on to make distinctions which never existed, and exceptions to one of the few general rules which seems liable to no exception. He seems to have been led into this mistake by the terms he made use of in the profound analytical reasonings, by which he convinced himself of the errors of the system which he attacked. He had familiarized himself to the use of "active capital;" "capital which employed the industry of numbers;" "returns which gave employment to industry;" and from using these terms, he came at last to consider all property, not only as more useful when frequently returned in business, but useful just in proportion to this frequency of return. He esteems a home trade as best, because the returns are most frequent; and for the same reason, a foreign trade of consumption as better than a foreign carrying trade. That a capital which was out a twelve-month
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in foreign trade, might have been four times as valuable (to the public) if employed in a home trade, where it could have been returned four times in the year. This reasoning, if conclusive, in those cases, would lead us to determine, that the capital of a banker, which perhaps is returned every month, is twelve times as useful as that of a grazier, which is returned but once in the year. In truth, they are just equally advantageous, and both just as profitable as other home trades, and all of them just as profitable as foreign trades, when the emoluments are regulated in due proportion to the risque, and to every other disadvantage, one of which certainly is the length of time the capital is out. And all trades will so regulate themselves when left free, much more accurately than philosophers or legislators can regulate them.

It is not my intention to pursue an enquiry into the quantity of evil, which a system full fraught with restrictions and prohibitions must have produced. Whoever minutely examines the extent of the evil will be astonished; it will meet him almost every where. He will find where millions have laboured in employments which have produced less to the public, by five or ten *per cent.* than they would have produced, had they laboured in such employments as a free trade would have offered. He will find

where thousands and thousands have been still worse employed. To such losses as these, must be added the much less, but very considerable, expences of swarms of officers, assisted by fleets of armed vessels, employed to compel a compliance with this unnatural system.

But though in a mere *commercial view*, the most perfectly free trade is best, still it may so happen, that good policy may require, that the advantage of a free trade should be in some degree sacrificed to the accomplishment of other objects.

In the actual circumstances of this country, National Defence is the only object to which it is proper in any degree to make this sacrifice. Our fleet is the cheapest and in every respect our best defence, and seamen for this fleet must be made in the merchant service. Although every regulation which encreases our carrying trade by restraining others, really injures our commerce, still that part of the navigation laws, which are calculated for this purpose, are the only unexceptionable parts of the whole system. It even seems important to encrease the number of our seamen beyond what we have ever yet had.

By turning more of our business into the carrying trade, we might perhaps alleviate some of the evils

evils which are so distressingly felt, every time we attempt to man a fleet. If we could not prevent the necessity of the horrid practice of impressing, we might not be compelled to use it so rigorously. We might probably so far increase our seamen, as to be able to man a fleet sooner, easier, and with less injury to our merchant service.

The most free trade with all foreign countries, for the purpose of commercial profit, and the increase of our shipping, for the purpose of multiplying our seamen, ought to be the two objects in all our commercial regulations and colony establishments. There is no situation or circumstance which can justify abandoning either of those two objects. The only question which can occur in any regulation on the subject is, how far one of them ought to be postponed to the other.

As for the projects of enriching ourselves, by giving the trade of one country a preference to that of another, or by giving one kind of trade a preference to others, or by paying people for buying particular kinds of goods from us, or by giving some trades the monopoly of our markets,—they are schemes which ought to be abandoned to the wisdom of those times, when we were to be made rich by prohibiting the exportation of money. When good can be
derived

derived from one of these projects, doubtless it may from the other.

Having no new principles to establish, mine is the more humble labour of inquiring, in what manner, well known maxims ought to be applied to particular branches of our commercial concerns.

REFLECTIONS,

REFLECTIONS, &c.

*The Subject proposed.—Value of certain Monopolies.
—Late Connection with the United States.*

IN what manner the trade to the United States of America can be rendered most profitable to this country, how far it would be useful to increase our colonies on that continent, what are the proper means of improving our West India Islands, and reducing the price of their produce; and how far this is consistent with proper attention to the great object of multiplying our seamen, shall be the subject of these Reflections.

All these considerations will perhaps resolve themselves into one, more readily than would at first view be expected, and will depend in some measure on the value of our monopoly of the trade to different colonies. Although all monopolies are undoubtedly injurious to the interest of trade, when the profit of both parties is considered, still that there may be a case, in which a Mother Country may derive some advantage from the monopoly which she imposes on her colonies, it is not necessary to our

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purpose

purpose to deny. It is enough for the present discussion, if we enquire whether the advantages of those monopolies are equal to the expence of procuring and maintaining them. The lately obtained independance of the United States, has been a lesson from which much instruction may be drawn ; and as it was a lecture addressed directly to this country,—for which we paid more than a hundred millions of money ; we certainly ought to profit by what useful advice it contains. While that event was in contemplation, it was dreaded as a disaster which was to bring on the ruin of this country. A large portion of the empire was to be dismembered from us, our trade was to dwindle almost to nothing, and, “ The sun of Britain’s glory was to be set for ever.” The separation was effected,—the independence of that country took place,—and we seemed, contrary to all expectation, to revive with new strength. Except that a great addition had been made to our debt, we perceived no evil from the separation.

Now the event has happened, the explanation is plain. We had long been used to call that great country ours ; the people were our subjects, their ships were British ships, the commerce of that country was extensive, and it was ours. The fisheries carried on by the New England people were extensive,

five, and they were our fisheries ; and their seamen were our seamen. But now we perceive that it was only by a kind of fiction that we called all these things ours.

Admitting that we derived some small advantage from the monopoly which we imposed on their market for the produce of that country, particularly the produce of the Southern States, the advantage of that monopoly was almost nothing to us, though to them it was a burthen. As to the Northern States, which were the most numerous, and were our principal pride, no sooner were they gone from us, than we wondered why we had ever prized them as Colonies.—As a numerous and flourishing people, they were useful to us as customers, and such they would have been, if they had been independent from their first settlement. They indeed, sent us pot and pearl ashes and flax seed ; and so they do now, as cheap as they ever did. To procure their lumber, masts, spars, hemp, flax, and iron, we at times gave them bounties, probably not so much with a view to gratify the colonists, as to gratify our own pride of supplying every thing, from what we called our own dominions. Thus we gave bounties to obtain the privilege of buying as cheap from America, as we could have bought from other places : and if we were disposed to give the same

bounties now, we should undoubtedly have as much of those articles as we ever had ; and they would (except in name) be just as useful to Great-Britain, coming from the United States, as coming from our Colonies. The American Provinces had vast quantities of good lands, but they were not our lands,—we derived no revenue from them. They had extensive fisheries and numerous seamen,—but we did not own the fish they took ; and if we were in want of seamen, we might almost as well go to China for them, as to New England. The cod fisheries, which never did us the least good, except that they enriched those people who were customers at our market, were the principle article for which we always valued the New England provinces. But next to the cod fisheries, we were most proud of our transatlantic ship-building and whale fisheries. They indeed, built many ships for us, and very cheap, which was an undoubted advantage to our merchant service ; and we compelled the people of that country, to give us the monopoly of the produce of their whale fishery : but the instant they were separated from us, we acted as if we had supposed that it was an evil for us to have American built ships, or American whale oil ; and prohibited the use of them. While we could give them law, we compelled them to bring their oil to our ports, and also paid them bounties for coming,—but the instant we could

could not compel them to come, we forbade the use of their oil, as injurious*. The first of these measures was founded in national folly and pride, and the last in national animosity and revenge,—they were just equally wise. When colonies, they sent their shipping to carry supplies to our West India islands, and took away rum—but whatever we might formerly think of this trade, we now consider it as very detrimental; and have effectually prevented it.

We compelled the colonists to come to our markets for all the China and East India goods they bought, and for all the goods of European manufacture. These seem to be all the advantages of any importance, which we ever did, or ever could expect to derive from them, as colonies. That part of the trade from the Northern Provinces of America, which consisted in bringing pot and pearl ashes and flax seed to Great Britain and Ireland, and buying from us our manufactured goods, the Americans still continue. It has even increased, but every other trade which we had with them of any extent, we have prohibited, since their independence, as injurious to our own. As government have prohibited all the commerce we formerly had with

* It is not to be understood that no American whale oil *can* be imported, but the duty together with the bounty on British oil, was designed to be equivalent to a prohibition,

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those provinces, except this last; we may fairly suppose that it was for the purpose of obtaining a monopoly of this trade, that we formerly submitted to the expence of numerous establishments within the provinces, to secure obedience to our laws,—to the expence of armed fleets on their coasts, to watch their trade in times of peace, and the still greater expence of armaments to protect our right to those colonies in war,—a right which consisted in many burthens, but no one advantage, except the monopoly of this trade of bringing to us the few, very few products of those Northern Provinces, which are suited to our market, and supplying them with our manufactured goods. This was indeed, an important branch of commerce, but surely the difference between what we might always have had of this trade, if it had been open and free, and what we did obtain by the monopoly, was never worth the expence we paid for it. Nor is it possible that any colonies, situated as those were, can ever be more useful to us.—I ought rather to say, none can be less injurious; for it is a gross perversion of terms to call such colonies useful.

It is not surprising, that the loss of such colonies as these did not impoverish us. If we had never claimed any thing more of the commerce of that country, than that it should be open to us, that we should be at liberty to go there, and they should
be

be at liberty to come here, this claim would have been worth supporting, but never would have cost us a single armament. This is just what we now enjoy, and we have very little reason to apprehend, that any power in Europe will attempt to take it from us ; nor would the attempt have been at all more probable, at any time since the first settlement of that country, if this had been our only claim.

How far colonies in the West Indies or other Southern Countries, can be made more useful than those we have been speaking of, deserves the careful consideration of government. But hitherto I have confined my remarks principally to the Northern Provinces ; my subject does not require that I should go farther. The injury we sustained from them, did not arise from accidental causes, or from mismanagement in executing our system ; the evil is in the system itself. Such colonies may indeed, be convenient to ministers, but they must always be a burthen to the nation.

*Nova Scotia, St. John's, New Brunswick, and
Canada.*

AFTER all the experience we have had with our New England colonies, we are now more eagerly engaged in the same system than at any former period. We seem determined to turn the more frozen regions of that country into a perfect garden, and are forcing them forward, if not with all the warmth, at least with all the expence of a hot-bed cultivation. Never did government expend one tenth part so much money in settling, governing, and nursing an equal number of colonists in any other place, as it has within the last eight or nine years, on those bantlings of our dotage. But the money we have expended on this scheme, bears no proportion to the loss sustained by the sacrifices we have made of our commerce to this system. The independence of America has proved beyond contradiction, that the New England Provinces were, as *Colonies*, injurious to us *, and yet the utmost that the most visionary dreamer ever promised us, in favour of our remaining Colonies in that part of the globe, was, that they

* The Author would by no means be understood that the settlement of New England has been a misfortune to this or any other country. It was their connection with us as *Colonies* that was injurious. We expended great sums of money, and sacrificed our own trade, to the pride and folly of controuling theirs.

could be made to *supply the place of New England*. It is strange that we could be induced to believe this; and still more strange that such a belief should induce us to adopt the project. But to satisfy ourselves that we had a New England at command, we in the moment of our envy and chagrin, at the failure of our attempt to subdue the United States, gave ourselves up to an implicit confidence in the assertions of a writer, whom we wished to believe; because he asserted what our pride induced us to wish was true. This noble author says, that * “ Dis-
 “ tilleries may be carried on to as great advantage
 “ in Nova Scotia as on any part of the continent;
 “ as may also the important business of ship build-
 “ ing.” “ Nothing can be more evident than that
 “ Nova Scotia and St. John’s Island are better
 “ situated for fisheries than any other country.”
 “ Nova Scotia is not colder than Massachusetts, it
 “ is more temperate both in summer and winter.”
 “ The interior part of Nova Scotia is fine.”
 “ The fog, which prevails towards the Bank of
 “ Newfoundland, does not extend into the country
 “ above three or four miles.” “ Staves, hoops,
 “ scantling, and timber for house and mill frames,
 “ boards, shingles, &c. from the plenty of timber
 “ in Nova Scotia and Canada, and the beginning
 “ scarcity in the American States, most of those
 “ articles can be imported cheaper from the former

* Observations on the Commerce of the American States, by John Lord Sheffield,

“ than from the latter.” “ Nova Scotia has plenty
 “ of white oak for rum puncheon staves, and red
 “ oak staves for sugar and molasses, and plenty of
 “ timber for all other purposes.” “ Nova Scotia
 “ and St. John’s may raise oxen sufficient for the
 “ West India islands.” “ Indian corn may be
 “ raised as well in Nova Scotia and Canada as in
 “ New England. Canada is abundantly able to sup-
 “ ply the West Indies with flour; and no part of
 “ America furnishes greater advantages for ship-
 “ building, than our remaining colonies; the oak
 “ of Canada is heavier and more lasting than that
 “ of New England.” “ It is unquestionably a fact,
 “ that Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Island of St.
 “ John’s, may, with very little encouragement,
 “ supply our islands with all the shipping, fish,
 “ timber, and lumber of every kind; and with
 “ mill or draft horses, flour, and several other ar-
 “ ticles they may want.” “ The harbours in Nova
 “ Scotia are not frozen in winter; and the voyage
 “ is shorter from thence to the West-Indies, than
 “ from the American States.”

When this writer speaks of Canada, we must under-
 stand Lower Canada, for Upper Canada was not set-
 tled, and the author was opposed to settling it. If any
 remark could increase our astonishment at these asser-
 tions, it must be, that full credit has been given to them,
 at least, by government; and though the New Eng-
 land Colonies are agreed by this writer, and by every
 other

other person, to have been a burthen; still he urged, and government were persuaded, to tack exactly the same system on to these remaining Colonies.

We resolved that the frozen rocks of Nova Scotia and Lower Canada, were the very Garden of Eden, and that we would accept fruit from no other place. Hitherto these Colonies have, indeed, produced nothing of importance, except bills on London; and for them they have been the market of the United States during the last nine years, and will probably continue so, as long as we keep fleets in their harbours, and armies of soldiers, and still more numerous armies of place-men and loyalist pensioners on shore. These expences are, however, trifling losses, when compared with what we suffer from the mercantile regulations to which we submit, for the purpose of supporting this colonising rage.

But without controverting the probability of realizing our expectations of the ability and prosperity of these Colonists, What good can we ever derive from this Colony system?

Suppose our Colonists (for we will call them *our* Colonists) should succeed to admiration in the cod fishery, Are the fish ours? What one advantage do we derive from the success of a Nova Scotia fisherman, which we should not derive from the success of a Massachusetts fisherman? Is not every ton of whale oil, which is taken by a Colony

ship, a clear loss to this country of the whole bounty, and foreign duty ? Of what advantage is it to us, that these fisheries should increase the seamen of our Colonies ? The Colony seamen are as much out of our command, in case of emergency, as the seamen of the United States, or of Turkey. These two branches of business are of the utmost importance to our naval strength ; but to enable Great Britain to derive any strength from them, she must own them—she must not drive them into the hands of transatlantic settlements. If these Colonies have extensive employment for seamen, it will happen, as it formerly did, in our connection with New England ; that if we are compelled to impress seamen for our fleet, (as we always are on the least armament,) more British seamen will get into the Colony service, than we can ever expect to draw from that service to our fleets.

It has more than once happened, that a demand for seamen in Great Britain, has increased the number of them in every branch of American trade, which did not require their coming in the way of British ships of war. For the purpose of adding to our strength, by multiplying our seamen, that seems a strange policy, which is calculated to transfer the fisheries of Poole and Dartmouth, to Shelburne and St. John's. But if this trade must depart from Great Britain, it is of little importance to us, whether it settle down in Nova Scotia, or New England.

Colony

*Colony and Foreign built Ships.—British Navigation
and Seamen.*

AS to ship-building, would to God, that our Colonies could do more than even our hopes have promised. This is a business of great importance to our commerce, but of infinitely greater importance to our navy.

There is no point of view, in which I have been able to consider this branch of business, in which our present regulations do not appear extremely exceptionable. Considered merely in a commercial or pecuniary view, there is every reason for wishing to procure our ships in the cheapest manner, that there is for wishing to procure any other article, at the lowest price. Every reason which can be urged (and surely there are enough such) against burthening ourselves with a monopoly in our own market, in favour of any particular class of manufacturers or labourers, will apply against giving our ship builders a monopoly in their business. Whenever it can be proved to be advantageous to us, to build a ship at the expence of a thousand pounds, instead of buying it from abroad at five hundred, it can doubtless be proved to be to our advantage, to compel ourselves to eat English corn at forty-five shillings the quarter,

quarter, instead of buying foreign corn at thirty-two shillings; and that it would be still better, to compel our people to use only the oranges of our own gardens at two shillings each, instead of importing them at a half-penny. In our system of monopolies and restrictions, we have generally excepted those articles which are the basis of other trades; but surely nothing can be more solely useful, as the means of other business, than ships. Nor have we, in favour of any class of manufacturers, except ship-builders, been so severe upon our people, as to compel them to use the goods of our own manufacturers, to the exclusion of those of foreigners, where the foreigners would afford them so *very much* cheaper. We can probably, on an average, buy ships suitable for our merchant service, at one half the money (exclusive of sails and rigging) that those cost us which we build, even allowing for the difference in durability.

In most articles, if we compel our people to use British produce or manufacture, of greater first cost, instead of a foreign article which might have been bought lower, the difference in the first cost is the whole burthen; but in the case of ships, the difference does not end here; for ships are a kind of property which is every day liable to accidents, so that the insurance is worth, on an average, six or seven *per cent.* a year; and this the merchant carrier suffers on all the extra cost of his ship, so long as she lasts.

The necessity of employing our own workmen is stale cant. The very supposition, that a foreign built ship costs less than a British built ship, implies that our men employed at other work, could within the same time, and with the same capital, earn more than enough to pay for the foreign ship.

If this regulation is unjustifiable in a commercial and pecuniary view, still less does it seem defensible, in a view to the national strength. It is only a weak expression to say, that of all our mercantile system, that part which we call the Navigation Act is the best. It is the only part that has any good in it. The object and design of the Navigation Act was laudable and important ; and the measures adopted are generally very wise. But in the midst of this great and excellent collection of regulations, the *prohibiting the use of foreign built ships*, seems a measure calculated to obstruct the design and operation of every other part of the law. The sole object of those regulations was to strengthen our navy ; which was to be accomplished by increasing our carrying trade, and thereby multiplying our seamen. But who would have conjectured, that prohibiting our merchants from buying and using foreign built ships, could be thought the means of increasing our carrying trade?—In truth, no man ever did think so. Every man must have seen, that to increase our carrying trade, it was necessary that our merchants
should

should not only be at liberty, but be aided and assisted, to procure ships at the cheapest possible rate. And had this country been situated in relation to other parts of the globe, at the time these navigation regulations were first made, as it now is, no man would have made, or listened to a proposal for shutting out foreign built ships. When this regulation was made, the carrying trade was principally in the hands of some of our neighbours ; and it was foreseen, that at first it would be extremely difficult to execute these laws ; the only design of which was, to increase our navigation, and thereby multiply our seamen. The means of multiplying our seamen, was to own the ships, and cause them to be navigated by British subjects. It was easily foreseen, that it would not be sufficient, to insist that the ships which came into our ports, should be manned by our subjects ; for if the ships were owned abroad, the seamen, to find employment, might be drawn to reside abroad. The legislature foresaw, that if to prevent this last evil, they only required that the ships should be owned by British subjects ; many ships actually owned abroad, and then in our service, would under pretended sales and other artifices, be continued in our trade ; and that whenever the real owners of the ships thought proper to withdraw them from our ports, the seamen might follow them. Or even, if the seamen were not lost to the country, these artifices would subject the fair trader to a disadvantage.

advantage. The difficulty was to execute the act at first; for which purpose, it was necessary not only to turn out the foreign merchants and seamen who were then in possession of our commerce, but it was also necessary to turn out the ships which were then in the trade. Add to this, foreign built ships could at that time be bought very little, if any, cheaper than the British; consequently, no considerable burthen was cast upon the merchant. At this time also, all that part of America, which has since been so remarkable for ship-building, had been taken possession of in our name, and we admitted American built ships into our service, as British ships: and as it happened, that no part of the world could supply ships so cheap as America, this prohibition of using foreign ships, under the qualification of considering American built vessels as British ships, did us no material injury. The advantage, of admitting American built ships into our service, was indeed very great; but that advantage did not at all depend on the connection of America with us, as Colonies. It was entirely owing to the cheap rate at which we procured our ships; and it would always have been just as advantageous to us, to have had them from Russia or Norway, as from America, if we could have had them as cheap.

As soon as we were driven out of our nominal sovereignty over the United States of America, we

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judged

judged, and certainly judged very justly, that it was as proper to enforce the Navigation Act against the Americans, as against any other foreigners. We at first, apprehended some difficulty in some parts of the business: but *foreign built* ships had always been excluded from our service, by a system of laws, the wisdom of which had never been doubted; and from the circumstances already mentioned, we had really suffered little or no injury from excluding them; and we had thereby come to consider this exclusion of *foreign built* ships, as one of the leading principles of the system; though when it was introduced, it was probably designed only as a temporary and auxiliary expedient, to enforce the other provisions of the law; and even for this purpose was introduced, when British ships were nearly as cheap as foreign. But American ships, which were before to every commercial purpose *really foreign* ships, now became *nominally* foreign ships, and consequently were within our understanding of the principles of the Navigation Acts. We accordingly took the system just as it had long stood, and applied it to America. There does not, however, seem to be any very important reason for applying those acts to America now, which did not exist twenty years before the independence of that country, and which does not now apply to all our distant Colonies; for as to every object of our navigation laws, our distant Colonies are as much foreigners, as the Americans,

Americans, or the French, or Portuguese. It may perhaps be a question, whether the principles of that act ought not to have been extended to America long ago ; and whether we ought not to extend them to all our distant Colonies immediately ; if we could suppose they were likely to become of any considerable importance as *ship-owners*. It is not to be understood from the remark with respect to America, that we are supposed to owe any indulgence to the Americans. Whatever principles of the Navigation Act it is wise to enforce against any foreign nation, it is equally wise to enforce against all. But there can scarcely be room to doubt, that the great variation of circumstances, has rendered it, not only proper, but important, to vary the provisions of that act.

The principle and object of those laws are so simple, that it would be difficult to dictate a wrong provision, without immediately discovering it. The whole design being to multiply our seamen, by increasing our shipping and navigation, every restraint on importation or exportation in foreign bottoms, which occasions the use of British shipping, either at our own ports or those of our Colonies, doubtless has a tendency to effect the design. But surely prohibiting our merchants from using foreign *built* ships, when they can procure them cheaper than those built in Britain, must directly counteract

the whole object and design of the law ; for nothing can so directly tend to decrease our navigation, and diminish the number of our seamen.

It is worthy of some remark, how far this provision has affected our carrying trade already, though our American built vessels are not yet worn out, and though every other branch of our business has increased to astonishment. Before the late war, and for the first two or three years after, far the greatest part of the direct trade from this country to America, even to the Northern and Eastern States, was carried on in British owned ships, and navigated intirely by British seamen—there is now almost no such thing *. Until within a few years, there was seldom a cargo of Indian corn, wheat, lumber, or spars, sent from, even New England, to any of the parts of Europe, south of Cape Finisterre, except in British owned ships.—Now no British ship goes on that trade. From the Southern States of America, we formerly took their whole produce in British owned ships ; and though we are now turned out of almost all that goes to other parts of Europe, and though the Americans are exposed to the Algerines, we take less from them into the Mediteranean than at any former period.

* It must be admitted, that the American duties have partly effected this change in this particular trade, but the excessive expence of British navigation has done much more.

It is said, though I know not on what authority that there is now less British shipping (including our colonies) employed in the cod and whale fisheries, than was *owned in Great Britain* in those employments before the war; notwithstanding our bounties, and notwithstanding the New England people were supposed to own almost the whole.

Such is the expence of British navigation, that though our general commerce is prodigiously prosperous, our ships are more and more shut out of every trade, into which the laws will admit those of any other country. In the present eagerness of our pursuits, and prosperity of our commerce, What might not our navigation perform, if we had the means of procuring our ships and provisions at the cheapest rate? But is it not possible, that our best opportunity may be lost, if France should, under a mild government and wise administration, take advantage of her means of prosperity, and put her navigation on the cheapest establishment that is in her power?—In a pecuniary view, the money which the shipping in the merchant service of Great Britain has cost, over and above what it would have cost, to purchase the same shipping built abroad, is an enormous loss to the country. Perhaps, little inferior to one half the first cost of the whole shipping in the merchant service of the kingdom, exclusive of sails and rigging, and exclusive of what American built shipping still remains.

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As to the effect the measure has on our naval strength, it must be remembered, that any step which tends to drive our navigation out of the free trades, those trades in which other ships may be admitted as well as ours, is injurious; not only as it tends to lessen our commercial profits, and as it lessens the number of our seamen, but as it occasions peculiar inconveniences whenever any armament or military expedition requires the taking up of any considerable number of ships as transports, or for any public service. If on any such occasion, more ships are wanted than can be spared from the protected trade, (that trade into which foreign ships cannot be admitted,) we can readily take them from the free trades; and if the consequence should be, that all our ships are drawn out of the free trades, no considerable inconvenience is suffered, for those are trades which may be supplied with ships from any part of the world. But if on any such occasion we have no ships but those in the protected trades, those branches of business must necessarily suffer, unless we alter our navigation laws, and invite in ships which at other times we exclude; and even this would be a very inconvenient step. A difficulty, of a contrary kind, occurs as soon as the public service is at an end, and great numbers of ships are suddenly turned into the merchant service; if they are all British built ships, the owners must lose a large sum in them, as they cannot be employed,

ployed, except in trades where others employ ships of less price, unless they are sent into the protected trades, where on the sudden they are not wanted. These are evils which were less perceived in the last war, than they probably ever will be again; for till the close of the war, we obtained our ships as cheap as they could be obtained any where.

It would perhaps be difficult to propose a more certain, obvious and simple truth, than, *That permitting our merchants to buy their ships wherever they can procure them cheapest, is the direct method to extend our navigation, and multiply our seamen and ships* *.

Let us once more return to our favourite Colonies, from whence, indeed, ship-building, our pre-

* It has been objected this measure, that if we suffered our merchants to buy foreign built ships, we should immediately have no ship-wrights; and that ship-carpenters were as important to our navy as seamen. This objection puts the disadvantage under which our merchants now labour, in the strongest possible light, and gives additional strength to my argument. — But in truth, no such want of carpenters can ever occasion any inconvenience to the navy. Few ships of war are built on the press of any sudden occasion. They are built in peace, and the building in the king's yards, will make as many carpenters as it now does; nor will the merchants service be destitute of carpenters. Great numbers of ships will still be built in our harbours, and many more will be repaired than at present, because we shall own more; and these works will continue to us many ship-wrights as we shall want on any occasion.

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sent subject, is very far distant; and in all the eagerness of our wishes for their prosperity, let us for the present suppose, that they are capable of all we ever hoped from them; and particularly that they can supply our West India islands with an abundance of white oak, red oak, pine, and cedar, lumber, horses, oxen, poultry, Indian corn, beans, peas, oats, flour, and vegetables of various kinds. This is certainly an object of very great importance. On the regular, easy, and plentiful supply of these and other articles, which the tropical islands want from northern countries, much more of our commerce and wealth depend, than has generally been supposed.

But for the present, let us inquire why we should be at any expence; why we should subject ourselves or our islands to any burthens, to procure for our Colonies in North America the monopoly of the West India market? It is of no consequence to the West Indies, whether their supplies come to them from New Brunswick or from New Hampshire; unless it be that the latter is a larger market, and more likely to take from them such goods as they can spare; in which case the United States are rather by the West Indies to be preferred. And of what advantage is it to us, that the provisions or lumber sent to the West Indies, should have grown on the east side of the river St. Croix, rather than

than on the west? How much more are we enriched by the wealth of a man who lives in Nova Scotia, than of one who lives in Massachusetts? Does the corn of Canada produce us a greater revenue than that of Pennsylvania? And if they are both sent to market, do we receive more of the returns of one than of the other?

If, however, we owned the whole produce of those Colonies, it would be of no service to us. Nature has not designed that those regions shall produce enough for the support of any considerable number of inhabitants for a long time yet to come. We may ruin the West Indies by our regulations, but cannot help Nova Scotia by those means. Until the inhabitants of that country can raise provisions enough for their own subsistence, it is of no service to them to have against the United States, an exclusive right of supplying the West Indies. And if they could raise ever so great quantities, such an exclusive right would injure us and the islands.

Upper Canada.

THE new born Colony of Upper Canada, is the latest and youngest offspring of our colonising spirit; and like the offspring of other inconsiderate attachments, it may for a time, be the expensive favourite of a fond parent; it can never be an ornament or strength to the family. In both cases, the momentary pleasure of making them, is the only gratification they can afford.

We for many years treated that part of the continent of America, which now forms our remaining Colonies in that country, with the same general attention which we paid to our other Colonies. They enjoyed their full proportion of bounties, British ships of war, British civil and military officers, military magazines, and every other article which carried them British money, down to the close of the last war; since which they have been our only Darlings. No money, no favour, no protection has been wanting. Has the experiment which we have made, so far succeeded as to encourage us to proceed in the trade of manufacturing Colonies, and creating Governors with their military and civil list attendants? Or, are we discouraged with our attempts on the
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sea coast, and are therefore trying a new project on the shores of the Erie and the Huron? It would be an insult to ask the projectors of the Upper Canada scheme, What good this Colony was to do us. A man of any delicacy, would as soon ask one afflicted with the gout, What good his pain could do. Examine the map of the globe throughout every Quarter, and there shall not be found a single district of an equal number of acres, which is more perfectly removed from all possibility of benefiting us, by settling it as a Colony, than Upper Canada. If any man should have patience to torture his imagination, to find some one benefit which could arise from colonising this country, he will first enquire, How any Colony can be useful:—and the answer will be, That the Colony to be useful to the commerce of this country, and useful as a *Colony*, must be one, from which we can receive some article on better terms, than we could receive it from that, or any other place, in the course of a free trade; or it must be a place to which we can send some of our goods to a better market, than we could have in the course of a free trade, to that, or any other country. Merely that some goods will come as well from the Colony, as we could have them from other places, or that we can find in the Colony as good a market for our goods as at other places, is a miserable reason for being at the expence of settling, governing, and watching the trade of a Colony

lony, and then injuring our commerce to other places, to encourage the Colony trade. What man in his senses, would agree to submit to the expence of obtaining an exclusive commerce, if he could do the same business in a free trade, and with as good profit without expence ?

What do we expect from Upper Canada ? At present our furr-trade * from thence would be valuable, if we did not pay more to keep it than it is worth : but settling the country and cultivating the lands, is not the way to increase furs. No man ever thought of sending a Colony to Hudson's-Bay to raise furr. Are they also to build ships for us, as well as the Maple Swamp owners of New Brunswick ? If it is wise for us to use any except British built ships, Why not buy them at still cheaper markets ? We must not laugh at the idea of building ships for Great Britain in Upper Canada. The people of that country are as likely to do that, as to be of service to us in any other way. Are we to receive our wheat from Detroit and Michilamackinac ? If it would be a blessing to receive wheat

* Lord Sheffield proposes to give bounties on this furr trade : that is, he would have the Nation be at the expence of maintaining forts and garrisons in those distant regions, to protect our merchants in buying furs ;—a trade which he thinks is not sufficiently profitable to support itself without the aid of bounties.

from abroad, Why do we now prohibit it? Are we building a Colony to supply us with articles which we think it injurious to our interest to receive from abroad? Are our West Indies to have that supply of lumber, of oxen and flour from Niagara, which was promised them from Shelburne? If it is wise to open to them other markets, why prohibit them those which are at hand?

But with respect to Upper Canada, we might as well inquire, What it would be wise to do with the trade of Tskutki Nofs. Nature has designed, that the trade of that country shall be out of the reach of Great Britain, and every other power but their own. But if it were otherwise, What do we want from them? Say pot and pearl ashes. But will not every barrel they send us, drive a barrel of that article from America to some other market? Even if Canada could lower the price of ashes, they could at most only rival the United States, who having a free trade, would carry more to other parts of Europe, which would consequently receive the article as low as we could. And might we not as well leave the trade of Canada free, and save ourselves the expence of compelling a monopoly, when the end of it is to be, that every body else is to have the ashes as cheap in a free trade, as we obtain them by an expensive monopoly? As all that we are to obtain through this monopoly, is only thrown into the mass of what is obtained

in a free trade, we are no better than if the whole trade was free. If we have the whole monopoly, and part of the free trade, making together as much as we want, we are no better than if both trades were free, and we took from the mass of the two free trades, as much as we want. Why then settle a Colony for the purpose of buying a monopoly? It is not probable, however, that in any shape, the clear profit to Great Britain on this article, will ever be equivalent to the least salary we shall pay in the Colony.

But why this reasoning? One glance at the map is better than all of it. Hundreds of miles of winding crooked coasts,—covered with forests of woods, and thinly settled,—divided from the United States by lakes and rivers, which the inhabitants of both sides have an equal right to navigate ;—the passage from the Ontario to New York, impeded by scarcely a mile land carriage ;—and still farther west, the communication, in a good degree, as easy to Philadelphia. Under these circumstances we have a project for forcing them, to give us a monopoly of their trade down the St. Lawrence, a navigation of prodigiously greater length,—at all times difficult, and one half the year totally impracticable. And if the Colony was now in as great forwardness as we can expect it to be at the commencement of the twentieth century, it could furnish us nothing of importance,

portance, which we do not now prohibit from those markets which are open to us.

In support of this assertion, let us recollect that New England has already been longer settled, than Upper Canada will have been at the period we have mentioned ; and what could they send us which we do not prohibit? Ashes, tallow, lumber, and flax-seed, are nearly all. The last of these articles Upper Canada will never send us. The ashes can amount to but little, and as to tallow, probably none can ever come.

In truth, the inhabitants of that country will never have any foreign commerce, until they become a manufacturing country, and then we shall surely derive no great advantage from them. As to any attempt to prohibit those people from manufacturing,—the world has passed the day for such a project. Situated as those people will be, they will from the very first, make almost every article they use—this will not only prevent their buying any thing from abroad, but will prevent their producing any thing for exportation. Their soil and climate will not invite them to engage largely in the cultivation of any thing suitable for exportation, and their distance from foreign market, especially by the St. Lawrence, (the only way which will be of service to us,) will discourage the cultivation of the few articles which might otherwise answer. People settled far in-land, always consume

sume few foreign goods, even the lighter articles, and send little away. The people of Vermont, though now a very numerous body, and all adjoining the navigation of the river Connecticut on one side; on the other, the lake Champlain bounds them; and the Hudson is near them; still have been their own manufacturers from their first settlement, and the few foreign articles they have bought, have been paid for in ashes on the east side of the state, some wheat on the west, and a few live cattle which could travel to market from all parts of the state. But the American store-keepers tell us, that ten men near the sea shore, will consume as much foreign goods, as an hundred in Vermont.—And Upper Canada is as much farther from foreign market than Vermont, as Vermont is farther than Boston.

That the land in Upper Canada is good, and that consequently for the same sum we can hire more people to live there, than we could in some of our other provinces, is not improbable. They may also be called British subjects; for where a man has the vanity to wish his Name to be worn by another, it is only necessary to let the money go with it.

Exportation of manufactured Goods of Great-Britain, to the United States of America, and to our Colonies on that Continent.

IT will not have escaped the notice of the reader, that in estimating the advantages which we may derive from our Colonies on the Continent of America, very little attention has been paid to what may be expected from them as purchasers at our market; though this is one of the most obvious and prominent advantages to be derived from Colonies in new countries and northern latitudes. It was designedly omitted, that this branch of commerce, which is, and ever must be, in a good degree the same to all those Colonies, and to the northern or eastern Provinces of the United States, might be considered at one view.

This is certainly a very important commerce; and there can be no doubt that a numerous and wealthy people in our northern Colonies, would be very good customers to us for our manufactured goods; but whether our customers are in Quebec or New York does not seem very important. To secure the trade of our customers, and to be able to supply

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ply their market, seems to be more important than the place where they reside.

An estimate of the advantage of the monopoly we might obtain, by raising up a Colony, to be buyers at our market, cannot be made from the simple inquiry, How much will they buy of us? For we might surely employ our capitals to some advantage in free trades. The inquiry ought to be, *Will the profit of our trade to those Colonies, so much exceed the profit of any other trade, in which we might employ our time and capitals, as to be a compensation for the losses and embarrassment to which we subject our other commerce, and the expence we pay to force forward those Colonies, and enable them to become our customers?* If stating the question did not burlesque every attempt at reasoning on the subject, it might be added, that not one penny of clear profit can ever be expected from the monopoly of this trade, even if rearing up the Colonies of customers were to cost us nothing. If it be an open and free trade, where no compulsion is necessary, we might as well have the same commerce to any other place. But if we will compel a monopoly in our own favour, we must pay the necessary officers on shore, and keep armed vessels on their coast, and these expences must not only far exceed any *extra profit* which we may derive from that trade, *over and above what we might have*

have had in a free trade, but the expences must very far exceed every farthing of the profit, in every sense of the word. The profit to this country on all the sales we make of merchandise in our Colonies, is just as much in proportion to the extent of the business, as on the sales we make in the United States. The only difference is in the means which we use to obtain those customers. We do not hire the United States to buy our goods, nor do we flatter them by subjecting our commerce to burthenfome and ruinous regulations in their favour. The whole profit of our commerce with them is clear gain to Great Britain.

But as to the Colonies, the money which we send there to enable them to be our customers, and the money which we pay for the expence of watching their coasts, to see that they do not indulge the United States in sending them prohibited articles, are the two least losses, to which we subject ourselves to obtain their commerce.—On some articles we both pay them bounties, and subject our home market to a monopoly in their favour. The encouragement of our Colony ship-building, has been urged as a reason for compelling our merchants to procure their ships at double price, instead of purchasing them at the cheapest market. Whether this was the operative reason for that regulation, may be a question. It would, however, probably

be very difficult to find a better reason for it ; and surely it would be impossible to find a worse. One reason for continuing such a law is just as good as another. But our West Indies are subjected to ruinous restraints to favour the inhabitants of those Colonies.

We can expect to receive very few articles from those Colonies, except such as we shut our ports against, from foreigners ; consequently, receiving them from abroad is to be considered, rather as a burthen than an advantage. Therefore the sale of our goods to the Colonists, is to be esteemed our compensation for the money we pay, and the regulations to which we subject ourselves. It might be difficult to ascertain the amount of our manufactures, which the Colonists purchase, and on which our profits must arise : some people have said that two or three of our Colonies do not take so much in amount, as the government bills which they draw ; and the considerable market which they have afforded the United States for bills, ever since the close of the late war, seems to countenance the idea.— Be this as it may, exclusive of the goods which will go to the Indian traders, and which would go if we never colonised Upper Canada, we may assure ourselves, that for many years, the quantity of our goods which the inhabitants of that Colony will buy of us, will not exceed the amount of their bills
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on government. A great part of the settlers are in our pay ; in addition to which, we have sent four hundred foldiers to clear the land for them.

It has already been remarked, that that part of our commerce which consists in selling our manufactured goods to the northern Provinces of the United States, and to our Colonies, is just the same ; and that it is immaterial to us, whether our purchasers belong to our Colonies or to the United States. But though at a great price we hire purchasers in the former, we take some pains to lose them in the latter.

There can be no good reason for recommending any embarrassing indulgence or restraint on our commerce, to induce the United States, or any part of the globe, to come to our market. There are reasons enough against laying any restraint on our commerce, in favour of any one country against another ; and still more against subjecting it to restraints against ourselves in favour of foreigners.

It must be agreed, that the commerce between this country and the United States, is at present, at rather an unnatural height. That is, they come to us with rather more of their commerce than is for their interest on any permanent principles. Several

veral temporary causes have produced this effect. They come to us for many articles which we buy for our own use abroad, and import at a very great expence;—for instance, they buy of us a great part of their silks, large looking glasses, ladies fans and gloves, all of which they could undoubtedly have much cheaper from France, and some of them from other places. The reason of this is obvious: while we had a monopoly of their market, they became acquainted with our merchants and manufacturers; they learned just how to order their goods; and still finding it advantageous to come to us for most articles they want from Europe, they have few ships which go to France. Consequently, they obtain the acquaintance slow, and have few opportunities to order those articles; and those articles do not in America make the sole or even principal business of those who deal in them. This remark will extend to other articles, and from other countries. But these reasons must cease, and this part of our business fail; nor does any regulation which we can make, consistently with the interest of our own commerce, seem likely to prevent the loss. But in the trade to the United States, we have much less to apprehend from rivalry in Europe than in America; and it is worthy the consideration of government, whether some regulations may not be made, consistently with leaving our own trade as open and free as at present, which may tend to preserve

serve to us the market of those States, which probably consume about twenty times as much European manufactured goods, as all our Colonists on that continent. Since we formed our ideas of the commercial relation between this country and America, many changes have taken place. None seems so likely to affect our commerce, in a great degree, as the change which has taken place in the price of labour.

It was for a long time a fixed opinion in both countries, that the price of labour was so much higher in America than in Europe, that the Americans could not, at least for centuries, become their own manufacturers.

This opinion begins now to be abandoned in America, but it still receives almost universal assent in England. When we first formed this opinion, (more than an hundred years ago,) it was doubtless true, that labour was much cheaper in England than in America. But within an hundred years, or something more, our mercantile system has had time to effect great changes. We have restrained the importation of almost every thing which could be made within the kingdom, though at a greater expence; and consequently the price of all those articles rose.—We gave our Colonies an exclusive right to our market, for almost every article which
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they could be expected to produce ; consequently, all those articles (which include a great portion of our imports,) cost us more than if we could always buy them at the cheapest rate. We also compelled not only our own people, but our Colonies, to use the manufactured goods of Britain only, which had the double effect of raising the direct price of *our* manufactures, and the expence of cultivating *their* lands, and consequently, the cost of the Colony produce which we must use. Having burthened the land-owners, farmers, and labourers, with a monopoly in favour of our manufacturers and Colonists, we next compel all our people to eat British grown provisions, and even in ordinary times give bounties on the exportation of the most important article. Finally, this system has been carried into every thing, and has every where had the same effect ;—it has raised the price of every thing. While this mercantile system has been operating, our taxes have increased to a degree unparelled in any country or any age. Some also suppose, that the flourishing state of our commerce has had a similar effect. The result, however, has been, that the price of labour is now much higher than formerly, while several causes, which it is unnecessary to mention, have tended to lower the price of labour in America. It is an undeniable fact, that, *In the New England States, the general price of the labour of Mechanics, is lower than in the great commercial and manufacturing*

turing towns in England. This is a very important fact, and one which must have great influence on the manufactures of Europe *. The price of labour must continue much higher in this country than in most others, so long as the expence of living is as great as at present,—or our mechanics must leave us. The Americans do now, not only come to us for some articles which they could obtain cheaper from

* The Author has not asserted this without having the best of all proofs of the price of labour in that country. He knows it from experience, and can shew it from his own books. In 1787, and the latter end of 1786, journeymen Smiths, Carpenters, Cabinet-makers, and Wheel-rights, were hired in New England at three dollars per week, which at the then rate of exchange, was about twelve shillings and six-pence or twelve and nine-pence sterling. This was by no means a singular instance; almost any of the journeymen in any of the mechanic trades common in that country, could have been hired at that price, and may have been at any period since, and in some trades still lower. It is very well known that the usual nominal price is higher, but the business of that country is so frequently done by barter, and a kind of nominal price, that the only way to learn the real price, is to enquire what those give who contract to pay *money*, which is not the general practice. The price of mere labourers work, who have not any mechanic trade or art, is higher in that country when compared with the labour of mechanics than in this; but it is not probable that the general price of journeymen mechanics in our great towns, including London, is by any means as low as three dollars; the nominal par of which is thirteen and six-pence, and the real value at the actual rate of exchange, may in general be about thirteen shillings. The mechanic, indeed, at those prices, will get a better subsistence there than here, owing to the difference in the expence of living. This thirteen shillings will buy more than one hundred pounds of good beef.

other parts of Europe, but they come to us for very many which they could make cheaper at home. This they just now begin to perceive, and are eagerly turning their attention to obtaining the necessary knowledge of manufactures, a knowledge very easily obtained. Within the last four or five years, all parts of New England, and many of the middle States, have begun attempts to increase their former manufactures, or to erect new ones ; and in almost every instance they have succeeded beyond their expectations.

It would be strange indeed, if so newly erected works, could yet do much towards supplying the very greatly increasing consumption of that country. So few years cannot have been sufficient for them not only to obtain the knowledge, but also to turn the course of business, which has long been settled in favour of Great Britain. But if the price of mechanic labour continues in the two countries as at present, it is impossible that our manufactures should continue to be sent to that part of the world, (to any where nigh the present amount,) when they are opposed by the expence of commission, freight, shipping charges, insurance, and use of the money during the time the goods are between the two markets, all of which must, on an average, give an advantage of ten or twelve *per cent.* in favour of the American manufacturer ; and except wool, the
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raw materials of nearly every article we make for them, is as cheap there as here ; to all which must be added the American duties, which have been laid within two or three years, of full six *per cent.* on the average of their importations from us. These circumstances, and particularly the price of labour, are strong, permanent, and perpetually operating causes, which must in time produce their natural effect.

Even already we have nearly done sending to the Eastern States, hats, shoes, boots, saddles, harnesses, sail-cloth, nails, and some of the heavier iron goods which we formerly sent. We scarce see a new ship come from Boston, which is not furnished completely with the sail-cloth made in that town, which they prefer, particularly in their fisheries, as of a better quality, as well as cheaper than the manufacture of Europe. Since the commencement of the late war, but mostly within three or four years, they have erected glass-houses in Boston, Hartford, New Haven, Albany, New Jersey, and some very extensive works of that kind near Frederick Town in Maryland. They have machines for carding and spinning cotton at Beverly in Massachusetts, in Connecticut, New York, and Philadelphia. Their potteries have increased, and they are making great exertion to bring them to the perfection of our Staffordshire works. At Hartford they have a consi-

derable woollen manufactory, and in many parts, particularly at New Haven, they have greatly increased their linen trade ; and at the latter place, they make perhaps the best thread in the world.

The article of buttons, which is more important than would at first thought be supposed, has been spoken of by a celebrated writer as one of the last which could be attempted in America, but it is one which is now made with great success in Connecticut, particularly at New Haven.

A great national manufactory is erecting in New Jersey, to embrace many articles ; a project which may be useful to them in obtaining and disseminating information ; though no immediate profit may be made at the works to the proprietors ; it however shews the expectations and exertions of that country. It is happy, however, that we are able to agree with Lord Sheffield in one consolatory remark, *viz.* " that this country does not intirely depend on the " commerce of the United States." If we will leave our trade free, our capitals will find employment when one branch fails, in some other ; but every diminution of our sales to the United States, is a loss to the best branch of commerce we now possess. This commerce is not the mere passing large sums from one port to another, it consists of selling the goods which employ the industry of vast multi-

multitudes, and when we sell them we realize the full price, there is no deduction for the expence of watching their trade, nor any drawback for burthenfome restraints on some branch of our own.

We have no trade which more deserves the protection of government than this, and the sooner measures are taken to preserve to us this market as entire as possible, the more may be expected from them; for when manufactures are once understood and established there, nothing that we can do will save us the market.

It is said, that a treaty of commerce is to be proposed to that country. What the object of that treaty is, remains unknown; we know that in most instances such treaties end in farther restraints on the commerce of both parties, and are really injurious to both. Important as this trade is, it is not of sufficient consequence to justify our hiring the Americans to become our customers, by giving them bounties for coming to our market, nor by contracting that we will not sell as cheap, or otherwise deal as well with any others. This branch of our commerce deserves more attention than any other, but neither this nor any other is of sufficient importance, to justify any species of monopoly or farther restraints in any of our business.

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Fortunately, the measures which tend most directly to preserve to us this trade, are such as we ought to adopt with a view to our own interest, if there were no such place as the United States, and such as are in our power, and do not depend on the event of any treaty, or the Will of any foreigners. This subject shall be farther pursued after we have made some remarks on our other connections in the western world. But let it be remembered, that if our commerce with the United States is not of sufficient importance in the eyes of government, to claim attention for its own sake, it is so intimately connected with the monopoly we are seeking for in our favourite region of Upper Canada, that they are inseparable ; for if any articles can be obtained cheaper in New York or Philadelphia, either from their own manufactories or otherwise than in Quebec or Montreal, the power of Britain will never be sufficient to compel our Upper Canadians to take them from our ports.

West Indies.

OF all the Colonies we ever owned, the West India islands have probably been not only the least injurious to our commerce, but least expensive in some respects, and most useful in all. They take all the manufactured goods they use from us ; they employ our capitals, our ships and our seamen in the slave trade, in carrying our goods to them, in transporting their produce to our own markets, and from thence in many instances to foreign consumers.

All this business is done by British capitals, and on British own vessels, and the produce which we receive from those Colonies is prodigious in quantity and value. We compel them to send us (with some small exceptions,) their whole produce ; not one article of which will ever interfere with our own ; unless we should at some time, carry our restrictions so far as to give our Gardeners a monopoly against ourselves for the tropical fruits. It is not with these Colonists as with the fisherman of St. John's, whose fish we never see, and whose wealth enriches not us ; or the whale-men of Nova Scotia, whom we pay for coming to our market in his own ship and with his own seamen.

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Our interest with respect to the West Indies is very plain. The more goods they buy from us, —the more produce they send us,—the more of our ships they employ, the more useful they are to us. The produce of these Colonies is, however, more precarious than that of most parts of the world, and perhaps, on the whole globe there may not be a place, where the expence of cultivation, of subsistence and doing business, is so great as in those islands. And this expence has of late years been increased by the advanced cost of the labour of slaves and the advance in the price of provisions and other supplies, which they formerly received from America.

It has been said by a writer, in whom all our mercantile system-makers have put full confidence, that even Jamaica did not (in 1784,) produce one-third the quantity of which it was capable; and in this he is as likely to be right, as in almost any thing he has said: that those islands are capable of great improvement there can be no doubt, and the only obstacle to this improvement, is this prodigious expence of subsistence and cultivation, which has been excessively enhanced by shutting the islands against the United States. The articles most important to the welfare of those islands may, indeed, be admitted in British ships; but that is almost a prohibition, and would be more completely so, if

by British ships, we intended ships *owned in Great-Britain*. The trade from those islands to the United States, is too remote to employ the ships of British merchants, unless the profit were indeed very great. The business is also of a very peculiar nature.—The goods from America are most of them bulky, of low price at first cost, and all first collected at the small out-ports, from whence they ought to be sent directly to the West Indies, and generally in small vessels is much best. But if those articles are sent to the larger towns to be taken away in British ships, the price of some of them, particularly some kinds of lumber, is doubled before they get on ship-board, and of many others considerably increased. But British ships employed at such distance from home, must be of considerable size, and must carry valuable cargoes to America; and nothing could be a worse judged adventure in commerce, than to send such cargoes to the small ports from whence the hoops, staves, heading, scantling, shingles, clapboards, and other lumber, with the poultry, potatoes, pulse, and Indian corn, ought to be shipped. All these and a thousand other articles, which at first cost very little, are extremely useful to the islands, and form a part of the cargoes, a more valuable part of which is generally live cattle. Carrying live cattle has always been found a difficult business to those unacquainted with it, and a very difficult business to learn. It has always been em-

phatically remarked, that places in that country, where there was even a general knowledge of the business, and where they were furnished with the proper vessels, but from whence they had not been in the practice of sending live stock, seldom sent cattle to advantage. Few people in Britain will ever build the small single decked sloops with high waists suitable for this business, and send them to freight cattle from America to the West Indies. If, however, any man should ever do this, and should be at the expence of learning his seamen the business, it would be with a view to continue them there; in which case they would be of no use to our navy. Seamen, to be of use to our fleets, must be such as often return to our ports. In truth, no such thing will ever take place—nor is it a matter of any consequence, what the difficulties are which prevent British owned ships going into that trade.—The fact is sufficient. When American shipping was allowed to go to the islands, they were plentifully supplied, but since that time they have not been half supplied, and at a very high price. And even these scanty supplies, have but a small part of them been freighted on British owned bottoms; some have been sent by the Americans to the free ports of the French islands, and from thence sent to the islands in Droagers. But it has been principally carried by vessels pretended to be owned in the Islands or in our Northern Colonies, but in some instances, really
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owned in the United States. It is to our interest altogether indifferent, in which of the two latter places the shipping is owned, but it would be an injury to us for the islands to become ship-owners. Thorough and woeful experience has evinced, that it is to the islands an unprofitable business; and it turns the labour, attention, and capital of the planters away from cultivation, which is the only employment that can benefit our commerce. Every ship which is owned in Jamaica, probably lessens the West India produce in our market, as much as the burning a plantation. These islands are valuable to us just in proportion to the quantity of sugar, cotton, coffee, and other produce which they send us.

Perhaps Government did not well comprehend the effect of the present system, and it is possible that some of the principle projectors and advocates for this plan, were more actuated by a desire to injure the United States, than a wish to be useful to us or our new Colonies; and it is to be feared that something like that was the national spirit of the time. They * urged the propriety of leaving the islands to raise their own provisions, rather than suffer them

* There has several times been occasion to mention the Treatise, entitled *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*; as the foundation of the present commercial system relative to the Colonies and the United States. It wears the name of Lord Sheffield, but no man who was acquainted with Silas Deane, his

them to be received from America. To the madness of squandering the national wealth on Colonies, which

writings, his connections, his temper and language, in 1783, and 1784, can read this work without believing him to have been the Author of at least a considerable part of it. On the other hand, the collection of estimates in detail and office documents, is a labour to which Mr. Deane never submitted. Some remarks have already been quoted, which Lord Sheffield would now probably be unwilling to repeat; some farther quotations may tend to shew what strange things, when aided by the spirit of the times, a Lord could publish and a Court could believe. He tells us, (p. 14,) that "iron tools are made in America, but that they cost three times as much as those imported from this country," and this was when there were no duties on the importation. He says, (p. 15,) that "it is known and admitted, that no good steel is made but from Sweedish iron;"---Why has Salisbury iron been in such repute? (p. 21.) "No steel is made in New York, Pennsylvania, or Jersey." My Lord, is there no steel made in America? Where is it made? What do they make at the works they call steel furnaces in different parts of all those three states? He would make us believe there are no Potteries in that country; and says, (p. 22.) "they failed in Boston and Philadelphia." But will he say that there are any of the eastern or middle States destitute of Pottery works? (In p. 23.) he says, that "no clay suitable for glass-house pots, had been found in America." It is not probable that Lord Sheffield knew any thing about this article, but Mr. Deane knew the contrary was the truth.

The strange assertion, that "the Americans did not raise wool enough to make each person a pair of stockings," is very little consistent with the account this writer gives of the vast numbers of sheep which were sent from that country to the West Indies. He says, (p. 32.) "most of the Apothecaries, Physicians, and Surgeons in the States were born or educated in Britain." Some Americans assert, that in all the five eastern States, there is not one eminent Physician, and but one or two of any eminence in the other

which can produce only provisions which we will not suffer them to send us, they would add the wise scheme

other profession, who were either born or educated in Britain; and that not one in a thousand of them ever saw this country. He says, "they will import their China, and India goods, salt-petre, and gun-powder from hence;" and (p. 49.) he lets us know, that "the Americans do not understand the difference between the wine of Madeira and Teneriff." He says, (p. 119.) that "Great-Britain and Ireland can supply grain cheaper than the United States;" but tells us, "the average price of wheat in that country is three shillings per bushel, the average weight of which is from fifty-eight to sixty-three pounds." Really my Lord, American wheat, which weighs from fifty-eight to sixty-three pounds the bushel, is excellent corn. Can such be purchased in our markets for less than three shillings the bushel? Consider also, that you ought to buy it in Europe for two shillings and sixpence, to undersell the Americans, for they can send it to the West Indies full six-pence per bushel cheaper than it can be sent from hence. They say, (p. 121. 123.) that "American beef is dear; that salt hardens it, and eats up the fat and juices; but that it rots as soon as exposed to the air." It is strange that beef which is rendered *hard by salt*, should rot so soon. Is not this a new phenomenon in physics, my Lord? As these writers have not, so far as I recollect, told us the American price of beef, (as they have of wheat,) it is difficult to say what they called *dear*; but we know they thought it necessary to make laws to prevent them sending it to our markets,---and common sense says, that good grass fed beef is worth about one-penny half-penny per pound in the eastern States. They inform us, that we never well supplied our West Indies with Soap; the islands always were obliged to get some from the Dutch. But they say, (p. 123.) "the southern States must take butter, soap, and candles, from Great Britain." And on the next page they again change their opinion, and we are told, that "if the islands are open to the trade of the United States, we shall lose the supplying them with soap and candles;" because the Americans will undersell us. On the next page we are told, that salted fish

scheme of turning the West Indies into the same cultivation.

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fish can be sent cheaper from Nova Scotia to the West Indies, than from the United States; but that if the islands are open to the trade of America, even in small sloops of sixty tons and under, they will *certainly* acquire this trade.

They tell of more taxes paid in that country, than were ever paid in *this*, and twice as many as in any other, and that too in 1783, when they did not pay a farthing of principle or interest of their debt; though now without a shilling tax, except the duty on importations, amounting on an average to six or eight per cent. and a small equalizing duty on home distilled spirits; they pay the whole interest and annually sink part of the principle. The Americans seem very ignorant of business, for these writers tell us, (p. 169.) that bills on France “for a long time were from twenty to thirty per cent. below par; whilst bills on London were at the same time above par in Philadelphia and Boston.” These gentry tell us in almost every section of the book, that the price of labour is high in the United States; they mention it in p. 191, and in a note annexed to the next page, they say that “even the *best and stoutest* labourers cannot get more than ten or twelve pounds for a years labour.” To quote all their wild, groundless, and contradictory assertions, would be to reprint a great part of the work, these are a sufficient specimen to shew the dependance which may be placed on their assertions relative to facts.

As to the opinions and projects which these writers formed on the subject of our trade, they can be accounted for only by the circumstances under which the book was written. Mr. Deane had become obnoxious to the American Government, under whom he had been employed, and had fled first from that country, and afterwards from France, and came to England, raging to be revenged on America, for the real or supposed injuries which he had sustained.—With much readiness and versatility of genius, and great knowledge of America and of business, he fell in company with Lord Sheffield, at a period when the general temper of our countrymen had not been rendered

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If we were not influenced by some motive which we should now be ashamed to acknowledge, there could

at all more friendly towards America, (their late enemy) by what was then considered, as the ill success of the war and the negotiation for peace. Lord Sheffield probably wished to make a reputation as a commercial politician, which was doubtless a very laudable ambition. But this could be accomplished only by urging proposals which would gratify the general wish to humble America by commercial regulations, more effectually than had been done by military arrangements. Under these circumstances, any thing of that nature was sure to be approved. Mr. Deane, who, but a few years before had been an active agent in fomenting the disputes between this country and America, and bringing on the late war, had now neither property, friends, or kindred, in any part of the British dominions; and consequently it was of little importance to him, how much we sacrificed to his project, for thwarting the commercial interest of the Americans; and Lord Sheffield, who seems to have laboured and written more than he thought, did not distinguish accurately what commercial advantage was. Hence it is, that the old system of preventing the prosperity of foreigners, to give ourselves comparative importance, has been violently urged; but the direct interest of no part of the British empire has been the uniform object; and in many instances, our most obvious interests have been sacrificed, without possibility of advantage. Thus they propose, that the Mother Country should sacrifice her own commerce and expend her treasure, to create Colonies in the North part of America, to supply the West Indies. As to our West India islands, these writers have not made a single proposal which does not go to their ruin. After having proposed, that rather than suffer these islands to be supplied in the cheapest manner, they should be compelled to become ship-owners—to turn their cane lands into corn fields and grazing farms—to take their supplies from the French islands, rather than receive them directly from America;—and that if none of these means would answer, they urge that Britain should give up the islands, rather than suffer Canada and Nova Scotia to lose the monopoly
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could be but two reasons for adopting the present plan of procuring supplies for those islands.—One was to enrich our new Colonies by giving them a monopoly of that trade against the strong interest of the Islands, and to our obvious disadvantage by lessening their produce. The other was to increase

of their trade. How far the interest of this country would suffer by giving up the islands deserves consideration; but a man who could seriously propose to give up the West Indies, *for the purpose of keeping Nova Scotia and Canada*, ought immediately to put himself under the care of Dr. Willis.

Through the greatest part of the work they appear to consider the prosperity of those northern Colonies, as almost the only object of importance; but the instant that the supplying the West Indies is out of sight, they treat these Favourites, worse than other people would treat their most bitter foes;—they would prohibit the working of the mines of coal, which, it is said, those countries have in abundance, excellent in quality, and easily wrought. Fortunately for evading the malice of this proposal, it is such as no government in Europe can now put in execution. It might have been done formerly, but the philosophers of the American and French Schools, have lately read a course of lectures to mankind, which are quite opposed to such a system.

Adam Smith published his Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (a work to which the world is more indebted for just and accurate principles of commerce than to all other writings yet published on the subject, at least in the English language) about the same time that the Book we have been quoting was published. This strange collection of inconsistencies has been made the foundation of all the commercial regulations since that period, and it underwent as many editions within eight months as Adam Smith's did in as many years, and not a single principle of Dr. Smith's has yet found its way into our system. Our statesmen, indeed, compliment Dr. Smith, but they seem afraid of such simple principles.

our own navigation by making us the carriers of those supplies. But is it of any importance to our commerce or wealth, whether those islands are supplied from Nova Scotia or from Massachusetts, provided they be plentifully supplied? We have no commercial connection with the people of either of those places, except that they are customers to our market, and in that respect the latter are as important as the former.

But say these projectors, and after them our government, it is necessary to the increase of our navigation, that all these goods should be freighted in British ships. A man would, indeed, be a bad advocate for our navigation, who should propose worse measures than these projectors have caused to be adopted. The increase of our navigation is an object of which we never ought to lose sight. But by our navigation, we ought always to intend *British owned* ships, not the ships of our continental Colonies or of the West India islands. This distinction between British owned ships and the shipping of our Colonies was perfectly understood, and strongly enforced by those who urged the present system, when they found it convenient to state the former connection between this country and America. They then clearly saw that New England shipping had never been of any use to us, and expressed
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their joy that we lost New England so soon, because that country was getting the carrying trade * ; but mention lumber and cattle for our islands, and they instantly discover that not only Nova Scotia, but even West India navigation is vastly important to our interest, and urged that we ought to sacrifice every interest of the West Indies, to the project of forcing Nova Scotia and Canada into this very trade by which they say New England was like to ruin our navy.

Perhaps an end ought long ago to have been put to this section, by remarking, that eight or nine years violent exertion, to the infinite injury of the Islands, and of our Commerce in Cotton and Sugar, has not been sufficient to get any British shipping of importance into the trade. It is not probable that all the ships we now own in that trade would be sufficient to bring to Europe the surplus produce which we should receive from those islands, if we would suffer them to receive their supplies in American ships. Nay, perhaps, they are not half sufficient for this purpose, but if they were ten times more than sufficient for this, it is a miserable compensation for the scarcity and extra-price of Sugar and other West-India produce, and

* Observations on the Commerce of the American States, by Lord Sheffield, p. 86, 87, 88, and other places,

for an immense expence to the planters: All European settlements in the West Indies, which are prevented obtaining their supplies of lumber, cattle, and provisions from the Americans, and in American ships, must have them come at too great expence to afford any prospect of prosperity. Both our commercial interest and naval strength have been injured by this system.

Perhaps no man ever expressed so much contempt of the wealth, government, and strength of the United States as the writers whose work was the orthodoxy of government, and the origin of the present system; but they very seriously urged, that if the United States were permitted to navigate their shallops (as then limited to sixty tons and under) to the West-Indies, it would increase a rival navy in America; but it would be treating ministers with too great disrespect, to suppose they could have been influenced by such reasoning as this.

Present high Price of West India Produce, particularly Sugar.

SINCE the conclusion of the late war, the supplies of Sugar in our market have been perhaps about as much affected by Hurricanes and Borers in the Islands, and by disasters at sea, as we may expect will ordinarily happen from similar events within like periods of time. But within a few years the demand for that article has been greatly increased in all parts of Europe, and particularly in Great-Britain and Ireland, while the production of it has by no means kept pace with the demand. The late unfortunate events at St. Domingo have also produced an effect on the price which will, in some degree, continue to be felt for several years. But the advance in the price of sugar had been constant, and was very high before the misfortunes of St. Domingo happened.—Although our West India islands, from the quantity of uncultivated or badly cultivated lands which they contain, were abundantly capable of an improvement which would have supplied the increasing demand, still it has not been obtained. Our West Indies have not increased in population, or improved their cultivation so fast, as most other settlements in that part
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of the world, though the price of sugar and other produce, has uniformly been highest in our islands; and though no Mother Country in Europe has been in so flourishing circumstances as Great-Britain *.— The capitals in our islands have undoubtedly increased, but as the price of the supplies which they formerly had from America has advanced, more of

* The Spanish government has in most instances prohibited all intercourse between foreigners and her Colonies, and in general her Colonies are poor, or rather they improve slowly; but in favour of some settlements they have given the most extensive liberty to supply themselves as they pleased with Provision, Lumber, Cattle, and many of the most important articles. In consequence of this permission, the Island of St. Trinadada has, from wild woods, become an important settlement within a few years. The Dutch settlements at Surinam and Isequibo have been open to America for many of the most important articles from that Country; and notwithstanding the trade from Europe to those settlements is in the hands of a privileged company, they have greatly flourished. The French permit their Islands to supply themselves with almost every article they could receive to advantage from America, at certain of their ports; and even under this restriction, the progress of improvement in their Islands has, within these last ten or twelve years, far exceeded any thing known in ours. The Danes permit a very free trade between America and their little Islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas, so far as respects importation into the Islands, and the exportation of Rum, and, under certain circumstances, other articles; the consequence has been, that the quantity of produce sent from those places to Denmark, and the wealth of their settlement, would astonish any person acquainted there twelve years ago. No Mother-Country in Europe, except Great-Britain, ever required that their Colonies in the West-Indies should receive their supplies from America in European ships.

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the capitals of our islanders, and more of their time and labour has been employed in raising provisions, or in purchasing and navigating their ships, and less in producing sugar. Nor does it appear by any means certain, that even the present price will produce a very rapid improvement in those settlements. Indeed, if any thing does produce a very rapid improvement there, so long as their supplies cost them the present price, it must be our continuing to pay a very extraordinary price indeed, for their produce. If we will obtain our sugar from the West Indies, we must either continue to pay the present price, or we must suffer them to obtain their supplies from America in the cheapest manner; and as this would on the whole, considerably increase our commerce, and particularly our navigation to the West Indies and the Continent of America, without diminishing it to any other part of the globe, it can scarcely be doubted which part of the alternative we ought to adopt.—If this measure should turn one British *owned* ship out of carrying lumber and live cattle from America to the West Indies, it would find employment for two, nay, possibly for ten, in our trade to the islands; and by furnishing to the United States, an additional employment for their small vessels, and an additional market for the produce of their lands, would retard the progress of their manufactures and insure us their market. Suffering our West Indies to receive their supplies in the cheapest manner, would

would be greatly advantageous to our commerce, both to America and to our islands.

There are two other proposals said to be in agitation for reducing the price of sugar; neither of which, however, extend to coffee, cotton, or any other article, though all West India produce has been advanced in price by the same causes which enhanced that of sugar.

The first of these proposals is, to lessen the drawback on the exportation of sugar, which is in other words, to lay a duty on the sugar which we sell to foreigners. It would be strange if we should make laws to compel our people to eat what sugar they have, rather than sell it to foreigners, when they offer the price at which our people are willing to part with it.

We never supplied foreigners to good advantage with this article, because it always cost more in our Islands than in other places; but taking off the drawback would immediately limit the produce of our Islands to the quantity consumed at home; and, as no more would be attempted than a sufficiency for our own consumption, whenever the islands were distressed with any of those disasters which happen to them every few years, we should probably have sugar advanced to a price we never yet knew. This,

however, is a scheme which no person above the rank of a coffee-house politician will ever adopt.

The other proposal is, to permit the East India Company to import sugars from the countries to which they have an exclusive commerce. Certainly our ports ought to be open, and equally open to the East Indies, and to every other part of the globe, for any article we may want. But how can this be done consistently with our present system? If we open our ports to the sugar of the East, it can still only be imported by the East India Company; but it can undoubtedly be imported cheaper from the East Indies, even by this Company, than under our present regulations, it can be had from our West India islands; the consequence is, we shall only transfer the exclusive right of supplying our markets from the West India Islands to the East India Company. This would add prodigious power to that great Company, and would give vast influence to those who have the controul of their affairs. Sugar is an article of infinitely more consequence than any which they import at present; and it is one in which they could do infinite mischief, if the management of their affairs should be in hands disposed to abuse their trust. By importing great quantities at first, they would, within two or three years lessen the cultivation of it in the West-Indies, and then it would be in their power to command any price. This is the
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only article in which they could have so strong an inducement to attempt any thing of this nature, for in all other articles they have no rival, and consequently it is for their interest to keep the market as steady as possible. If, however, this business were to be conducted as fairly as we could hope it would be, still it must be attended with other evils. The West-Indies are liable to all the burthens of our system, which has been pressed peculiarly hard upon them within a few years past, and this has been the immediate occasion of the high price of their sugars—they have submitted to the burthensome restraints and prohibitions which we have laid on them; as an Equivalent for which, we gave them the exclusive right of supplying our market; and a very dear bought equivalent has it been to the islands. Individuals however, who laid out their money in those islands, knowing that they must submit to our present system, have less reason to complain, so long as we continue to them the equivalent; but the moment we deprive them of this, by supplying ourselves with sugar from the East Indies, our islands not only become useless and burthensome to us as a nation, but we ruin the fortunes and hopes of thousands who adventured their all on the faith of Government, that this equivalent should be continued. These are very important difficulties in the way of adopting this proposal for reducing the price of sugar. They are difficulties which arise entirely from our system

of monopolies, restraints, exclusive rights and prohibitions; a system which, like the opening of Pandora's box, has let in all manner of evils on our commerce; and it has never been the object of our political doctors to shut this box again; but when they found a torrent of one kind of evil flowing out at one aperture, they always contrived to open the opposite side, and let out an equal quantity of evil of an opposite kind, to balance the former, and thus to keep the state from immediate ruin by counteracting one evil by another; and the whole art and address of our Ministers have been employed in determining what quantity of one disaster is sufficient to counteract another. Thus monopoly is set against monopoly, and prohibition against prohibition—the distress of starving the West Indies, is counteracted by compelling John Bull to use sugar at double price—and so on without end. One part of the empire is made to oppress another, and he is the best Minister who can contrive to apply those mutual oppressions, in such degree and manner as to oppress and injure all parts as equally as possible. This system of blunders (and all complex systems are systems of blunders) has now become so intricate, that no person pretends to understand our commercial regulations, without making them his profession, and labouring at it as a business almost for life, and even then he is considered as engaged in a kind of necromancy.

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It is, however, very probable that something will be done relative to the importation of the sugar of the East Indies to this country. An advocate for a free trade would say, that our islands ought to be suffered to obtain their supplies in the cheapest manner, and that then we ought to open our ports to the importation of sugar from the East Indies; that the charter to the East India Company should not be renewed, or at least should not be suffered to extend to the exclusive right of importing sugar. Our Government will, however, probably do very differently,—they will probably set the political jugglers to work, to decide what Duty on India sugar will be proportioned to the difference in the expence of that article in the two ends of the earth, so as just to admit a considerable quantity from the East Indies, and still have *some* from the Islands; just so as to furnish a pretence for keeping up our expences in the West Indies.

Effects of several Proposals.

IT would probably be very difficult to assign any good reason for giving a bounty on any Colony production whatever. The reason for giving bounties on the whale oil, totally fail when applied to the whale fishery of our Colonies. Those bounties even to our own ships and the inhabitants of Great-Britain, as a mercantile regulation, designed merely to promote our commercial and pecuniary profit, would undoubtedly be very wrong ; but with a view to defence, by increasing our shipping and seamen, the giving such a bounty may be wise ; but our defence is not promoted by tempting the Colonists to come into this trade, any more than it would be by sharing it with the Portuguese.

As the advantages which may be derived from the Continental Colonies, and from the Easterly Provinces of the United States, are in all respects the same, it is no more proper to pay money or subject our own commerce to restraints, to procure or increase the commerce of one than of the other.—Neither this or any other trade is worth buying, at the expence we have lately paid out on such projects. Every view of our connection with those

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Colonies, plainly indicates that we ought to send them no more money.

As to the United States, the principal danger of an unfavourable change in our commerce with them, arises from the probability, or rather from the certainty, that they will become their own manufacturers; and this is brought about principally by a relative change in the price of labour. Whatever would tend to reduce the expence of living here, and consequently the price of labour, would directly tend to increase our exports to all parts, and would particularly tend to preserve us the American market. But considering the powerful classes of men, who are interested in the monopolies and regulations which have raised the price of all the necessaries of life, to almost an unheard of degree, we must not expect that any direct measures for reducing them will ever be adopted. It will be a long time before we shall be extricated from our system of monopolies and restraints; all we can hope for is, that no more will be added, and peradventure, now and then, one may be removed. Nothing which can be hoped to take place, would so powerfully tend to preserve to us the American trade, and augment every other, as to repeal that strange regulation which requires that all British ships should be *British built*. In commerce, nothing can be worse imagined, than to compel our merchants to procure their ships at
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the highest price, instead of the lowest. As to our naval strength, which seems to have been the object of our Navigation Acts, nothing can more directly oppose the increase of our shipping and multiplication of our seamen, than compelling our merchants to give higher for their ships, than those of other countries give for theirs. It has already been remarked, that excluding foreign *built* ships from our service, was not the original object of the Acts which have that effect. Admit foreign built ships into our service, but require that they be owned and navigated by British subjects, and the Americans will build many ships, but will own very few. Let us procure ships at their price, and we shall be their carriers, particularly to the Southern Provinces. It is not to the advantage of the Americans to navigate their own ships, unless the price of carrying be very high; for the use of money is so valuable in that country, that they do not want to keep it in ships, unless the profit be very great; and although the labour of mechanics is lower in New England, than in great commercial and manufacturing towns in this country, it is not so with the wages of common labourers or of seamen. Permit the Americans to build the hulls of our ships, and they will come to us for sail-cloth; or if that manufacture is too well established to be broken up, this step will prevent their establishing some other, and will enable us to do our business cheaper, and greatly extend

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our carrying trade.—Every consideration requires that it should be so.

Our regulation of the corn trade, is in many respects extremely absurd, and in every respect extremely oppressive. Our bounty on the exportation of corn, has been approved, only because the system is too complicated to be understood.—Until the price of corn is higher in England than the common price in any of the middle parts of Europe, we pay a bounty of five shillings per quarter on the exportation, and are prohibited to import it. Thus when corn is dear abroad, we must not only pay the price of foreign corn, but on every quarter consumed at home, we must pay the corn factor five shillings more than the nett value in any foreign market, or he will send it away; and on every quarter which he does actually send away, we must pay him five shillings bounty, to be raised upon us by a tax on some other article.—It is not my business to inquire into the evils of the regulation of the corn trade, farther than it affects the price of labour.—There can be no doubt that allowing the importation of corn and salted provisions, would much reduce the price of bread and meat, which are, to nine persons out of ten, much the greatest part of their expences; and on the price of those articles, much more than any other, depends the price of labour. When all monopolies are held in the
detestation

detestation they deserve, this in favour of our landholders will be abolished.—If it were to be done at this time, it would, by finding employment for more of the Americans in agriculture, and reducing the price of labour at home, insure us a more extensive market for manufactured goods.—We can never send them corn; and the present regulation is calculated to prevent us sending them any other article. It is however to be feared, that the day when this policy shall be adopted is at a very great distance.

We now have the whole produce of the West Indies, and there is no way to increase our business to those parts, but to increase their produce: to accomplish which the means have already been pointed out; and fortunately, the only means which directly tend to accomplish this object, will undoubtedly increase our navigation, and the sale of our goods to America; without injuring or restraining any other commerce. We may now indeed, reduce the price of sugar, by opening our ports to the sugar of the East Indies; but the interest of the trade to our islands, as well as every principle of justice, oppose this; unless at the same time, we suffer the islands to open their ports for supplies from wherever they can procure them cheapest.

In proposing to withdraw, as far as the dignity and justice of government will admit, our expences in
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the Northern Colonies,—to open the British navigation to all British *owned* ships navigated by British seamen, without regard to where they were built, —to permit the West India Islands to receive their supplies in vessels of the country of which those supplies were the produce,—and in proposing to admit, at least on more liberal terms, the corn and salted provisions of foreign countries, we have urged no expensive projects, no farther monopoly or restraint on any branch of commerce,—no measure which can weaken our navy or lessen our navigation. We have indeed, proposed to abolish some restraints, and some very strong monopolies, which circumstances alone will probably one day (when the subject is more understood) be a sufficient recommendation to any proposal, to give it weight.

Whenever the industry of any of our neighbours, protected by a wise and mild government, and directed by a prudent system of regulations, or rather left to operate perfectly free from government regulations, shall enable them to become our rivals, we shall probably feel more sensibly than at present, the propriety of suffering every man to obtain what he wants in the easiest and cheapest manner; and shall see the disadvantages of turning by law, the labour of our people from the more to the less profitable employments. But of all people, (on the principles of the present system,) those who are the greatest ma-
M nufacturers,

Manufacturers, who want to import least manufactured goods and most raw materials, ought to wish for a general free trade. I say, it ought to be so on the principles of the present system.—On principles of sound policy it is equally and greatly advantageous to all, and in a commercial sense there can be no exception.

Among the proposals with respect to the trade to our Colonies, Islands, and the United States, is the repealing the regulation relative to the Corn Trade; this, however, has no peculiar relation to those branches of commerce; it relates almost equally to every branch, and deserves great consideration.

All the proposals are within our command; we need not treat with America to obtain them, and perhaps little is to be expected from treating with them. As the Americans, however, have no interest in becoming navigators; and as at present our ships are liable in their ports to considerable alien duties; it would be well to demand of them, as an equivalent for admitting into our service foreign built vessels, and for permitting their vessels to go to our islands, that they should permit our ships to enter their ports on the same duties as their own; and it is probable they might agree to this, (and the rather as their southern states own no shipping) but if they would not, we certainly ought to make the regulations,

gulations, without the equivalent. If, indeed, they should agree to such a proposition, the French and Dutch are entitled to the same advantages, on the same terms, by treaties already made; but this would be no evil to us.—All that we grant them would be more advantageous to us than to them, though greatly so to both. I say more advantageous to us than to them; perhaps the evils of the present regulations are about equal; but in case of an earthquake, a hurricane, or ill nature and a misguided policy in a neighbour, they have more resources than we. They owe but little, they have immense and valuable lands, their habits are those which can accommodate themselves to occurrences.—We have almost no resource but our manufactures.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Since the foregoing Sheets were printed, a small Treatise, entitled "*Hints for some Regulations in the Sugar Trade*," has been published, in which the Author, who seems to be acquainted in the West-Indies, gives us a Table of the usual difference in the price of some Articles in the French and English Islands, viz.

Prices in English Islands.

Prices in French Islands.

25	Dollars	Lumber per m.	10	Dollars.
5	-	Salt Fish per Cwt.	2	$\frac{1}{2}$
5	-	Rice - - -	3	
12	-	Beef per Barrel -	8	
5	-	Indian Meal per ditto	3	
1	-	Corn per Bushel -	0	$\frac{6}{11}$

This shews that the English Islands pay more than twice as much for their American supplies as the French Islands. This arises solely from not suffering our Islands to receive their supplies in American Vessels.

Soon will be published,

(By the same AUTHOR)

A FARTHER

E S S A Y

ON THE

COMMERCIAL SYSTEM;

IN WHICH

The Consequence of leaving the

WEST-INDIA ISLANDS

Free and Independant will be examined.